Mayor and City Councilors  
City of Hamilton  
77 James St. N., Suite 230  
Hamilton, Ontario, L8R 2K3.

Re: Support for Anti-Idling Programs in the City of Hamilton

Dear Mayor and City Councilors:

There are two major local sources of air pollutants in the City of Hamilton: industrial emissions and transportation sources. Since Clean Air Hamilton was first formed in 1998, we have seen actions on the part of industry that have led to reductions in harmful emissions to the Hamilton airshed. Unfortunately, emissions from private and commercial vehicles have continued to rise in spite of improved vehicle performance; we are driving longer distances in more vehicles.

Clean Air Hamilton recognizes that in order to reach the City’s goals of improved air quality, improved public health, and reduced climate change impacts we must change driver behavior and promote the adoption of cleaner transportation choices. To achieve this goal, the City of Hamilton has made significant positive steps to improving public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and land use planning and has approved an anti idling by-law.

The unnecessary idling of vehicles contributes to air pollution and climate change through the release of nitrogen oxides, carbon dioxide and particulate matter. A 2006 mobile study commissioned by the City and Clean Air Hamilton demonstrated the significance of idling vehicles for emissions of nitrogen oxides which contribute to approximately 35% of the health impacts of air pollution (cardiovascular and respiratory admissions, and premature death) in Hamilton.

The transportation industry is recognizing the cost savings and community benefits of reducing vehicle idling as demonstrated by their participation this fall in Fuel Management Workshops held by Green Venture and supported by the City. Neighbouring municipalities to Hamilton have also passed Anti-Idling By-laws to encourage the reduction of vehicle emissions.

Strong support of anti-idling initiatives and actions to reduce vehicle emissions is an essential part a package of initiatives designed to improve the air quality in our city.

Clean Air Hamilton therefore encourages Council to take concrete steps to support anti-idling initiatives and regulations and the education of the public on the health impacts of emissions from the unnecessary idling of vehicles. The passing of the Anti-Idling By-law (By-law 07-160) provides a strong signal of support towards reducing vehicle emissions by drivers in the City and support of neighbouring municipalities who are addressing idling through by-laws as part of efforts to reduce emissions in a shared airshed.
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These actions will provide improved health and air quality benefits both locally and outside the City. Public opinion polls inform us that the environment continues to be one of the highest concerns, if not the highest, for citizens across Canada and particularly for the citizens of Hamilton. Air quality is the public's top environmental concern. Meaningful actions to improve air quality are always viewed very positively by the citizens of Hamilton. Support for anti-idling initiatives by the City of Hamilton would be interpreted broadly as leading by example and setting a high standard of performance for the City and its citizens.

Clean Air Hamilton is a multi-stakeholder group dedicated to improving air quality in Hamilton's community. The group is committed to improving citizens' health and quality of life through communication and promotion of realistic, science-based decision-making and sustainable practices. Our diverse membership includes participants from industry, academia, and three levels of government, health professionals, non-profit organizations and private citizens.

Sincerely,

Brian McCarr
Chair, Clean Air Hamilton